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CLAIMS

We claim.

- 1 1. A method for integrated event tracking of an electronic
- 2 escrow transaction, comprising:
- 3 receiving an instruction from a purchaser, via a network,
- 4 to effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a
- 5 sale, made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;
- 6 directing at least one network communication with each of
- 7 the purchaser, the seller and at least one financial
- 8 institution in effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and
- 9 storing a log of each communication, including the
- 10 instruction, associated with the electronic escrow transaction
 - 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
 - 3 purchaser;
 - 4 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from
- 5 the purchaser account;
- 6 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 7 seller; and
- 8 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 9 the seller account.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 initiating a debit from an account associated with a
- 3 processing agent; and
- 4 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit from
- 5 the processing agent account.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
- 2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 3 seller; and
- 4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 5 the seller account;

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6 wherein the credit to the seller account is a

- 7 corresponding credit to the debit from the processing agent
- 8 account.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 transmitting a notice, via the network, to the seller that
- 3 funds from an account associated with the purchaser are
- 4 available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or
- 5 provide the service for, the purchaser; and
- 6 storing an indication that the notice has been transmitted
- 7 to the seller.
- 1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein:
- the notice is transmitted after at least one of (i) a
- 3 predetermined period, beginning at initiation of a debit to an
- 4 account associated with a purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds
- 5 from the purchaser account are credited to an account
- 6 associated with a service provider.
- 1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, via the network, a first notice of one of (i)
- 3 the goods having been shipped, or (ii) the services having been
- 4 performed;
- 5 storing an indication that the first notice has been
- 6 received;
- 7 transmitting a second notice, via the network, to the
- 8 purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods to
- 9 the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the
- 10 purchaser; and
- 11 storing an indication that the second notice has been
- 12 transmitted to the purchaser;
- wherein the first notice is received from at least one of
- 14 (i) a shipping agent, or (ii) the seller.
 - 1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first notice includes a

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2 delivery tracking number.

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- 1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the
- 3 goods having been received from the seller and being
- 4 acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably
- 5 performed by the seller; and
- storing an indication that the notice has been received;
- 7 wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i)
- 8 the seller, (ii) a shipping agent, or (iii) the purchaser.
- 1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
- 2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 3 seller; and
- 4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 5 the seller account;
- 6 wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated
- 7 subsequent to receiving the notice.
- 1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the
- 3 goods having been shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services
- 4 having been performed by the seller;
- 5 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 6 seller;
- 7 storing an indication that the notice has been received;
- 8 and
- 9 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 10 the seller account;
- wherein the credit to the seller account is initiated
- 12 after a predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the
- 13 notice; and
- wherein the notice is received from at least one of (i)
- 15 the seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.
 - 1 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 receiving, via the network, a notice of one of (i) the

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3 goods having been received from the seller and being

- 4 unacceptable, (ii) the goods having not been received from the
- 5 seller, (iii) the services having not been acceptably performed
- 6 by the seller, or (iv) the services having not been performed
- 7 by the seller; and
- 8 storing an indication that the notice has been received.
- 1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a
- 2 notice to suspend a pending credit to an account associated
- 3 with the seller
- 1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein the notice includes a
- 2 notice to reverse a debit to an account associated with the
- 3 purchaser.
- 1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, via the network, a first notice that the goods
- 3 have been returned shipped to the seller;
- 4 storing an indication that the first notice has been
- 5 received;
- 6 transmitting to the seller, via the network, a second
- 7 notice that the goods have been returned shipped from the
- 8 purchaser; and
- 9 storing an indication that the second notice has been
- 10 transmitted to the seller;
- 11 wherein the first notice is received from at least one of
- 12 (i) the purchaser, or (ii) a shipping agent.
 - 1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the first notice includes
- 2 a delivery tracking number.
- 1 17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, via the network, a third notice that the goods
- 3 have been received by the seller; and
- 4 storing an indication that the third notice has been
- 5 received;

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6 wherein the third notice is received from at least one of

- 7 (i) the seller, or (ii) the shipping agent.
- 1 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 3 purchaser; and
- 4 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 5 the purchaser account;
- 6 wherein the credit to the purchaser account is initiated
- 7 at after least one of (i) upon receipt of a notice, via the
- 8 network from at least one of the seller or a shipping agent,
- 9 that the goods have been delivered to the seller, or (ii) after
- 10 a predetermined period, beginning at a notification to the
- 11 seller that the purchaser has shipped the goods to the seller,
- 12 has elapsed.
 - 1 19. The method of claim 1, wherein the goods or services are
 - 2 goods or services purchased from an Internet auction.
 - 1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 initiating a debit from an account associated with the
 - 3 purchaser;
 - 4 initiating a credit to an escrow account associated with a
 - 5 processing agent;
 - 6 initiating a debit to the escrow account associated with
 - 7 the processing agent;
 - 8 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
 - 9 seller;
- 10 storing an indication of the initiation of the debit to
- 11 the purchaser account; and
- 12 storing an indication of the initiation of the credit to
- 13 the seller account.
- 1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the escrow
- 2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the
- 3 purchaser account.

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1 22. The method of claim 20, wherein the credit to the seller

- 2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
- 3 account.
- 1 23. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving the instruction via a web page generated
- 3 subsequent to the purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to
- 4 the purchaser by an Internet web site selling goods or
- 5 services;
- 6 wherein the web page presented to the purchaser includes
- 7 details of the sale.
- 1 24. The method of claim 1, wherein the stored logged
- 2 communications include an indication of the date and time each
- 3 communication is received or transmitted.
- 1 25. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 retrieving any of the logged and stored communications.
- 1 26. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
- 2 receiving, from a shipping agent, a first notice that
- 3 goods have been delivered to the purchaser;
- 4 storing an indication that the first notice has been
- 5 received;
- 6 receiving, from the purchaser, a second notice that the
- 7 delivered goods are acceptable;
- 8 storing an indication that the second notice has been
- 9 received; and
- 10 initiating a credit to an account associated with the
- 11 seller.
- 1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein:
- the credit to the account associated with the seller is
- 3 initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined period,
- 4 beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has elapsed, or

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5 (ii) receipt of the second notice.

- 1 28. A system for integrated event tracking of an electronic
- 2 escrow transaction, comprising:
- a communications port configured to receive and to
- 4 transmit information via a network;
- 5 a processor in communication with the communications port
- 6 and configured to direct at least one network communication
- 7 with each of a purchaser, a seller and at least one financial
- 8 institution in effecting an electronic escrow transaction
- 9 arising out of a sale of goods or services made via a network,
- 10 and to log and store each communication associated with the
- 11 electronic escrow transaction; and
- 12 a memory in communication with the processor and
- 13 configured to store the logged communications.
- 1 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 receive an instruction from the purchaser, via network
- 4 communication, to effect the electronic escrow transaction; and
- 5 store an indication of the received instruction in the
- 6 memory.
- 1 30. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 initiate a debit from an account associated with the
- 4 purchaser;
- 5 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
- 6 debit from the purchaser account;
- 7 initiate a credit to an account associated with the
- 8 seller; and
- 9 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
- 10 credit to the seller account.
- 1 31. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:

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3 initiate a debit from an account associated with a

- 4 processing agent; and
- 5 store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
- 6 debit from the processing agent account.
- 1 32. The system of claim 31, wherein:
- 2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit
- 3 to an account associated with the seller and store an
- 4 indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
- 5 seller account; and
- the credit to the seller account is a corresponding credit
- 7 to the debit from the processing agent account.
- 1 33. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 transmit a notice, via network communication, to the
- 4 seller that funds from an account associated with the purchaser
- 5 are available and that the seller should ship the goods to, or
- 6 provide the service for, the purchaser; and
- 7 store an indication in the memory that the notice has been
- 8 transmitted to the seller.
- 1 34. The system of claim 33, wherein the notice is transmitted
- 2 after at least one of (i) a predetermined period, beginning at
- 3 initiation of a debit to an account associated with the
- 4 purchaser, has elapsed, or (ii) funds from the purchaser
- 5 account are credited to an account associated with a processing
- 6 agent.
- 1 35. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 receive, via network communication, a first notice of (i)
- 4 the goods having been shipped to the purchaser, or (ii) the
- 5 services having been performed for the purchaser;
- 6 store in the memory an indication that the first notice
- 7 has been received;

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transmit a second notice, via network communication, to

- the purchaser that the seller has one of (i) shipped the goods 9
- to the purchaser, or (ii) performed the services for the 10
- 11 purchaser; and
- 12 store in the memory an indication that the second notice
- 13 has been transmitted to the purchaser.
 - The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice includes 1
 - a delivery tracking number. 2
 - 1 37. The system of claim 35, wherein the first notice is
 - 2 transmitted by at least one of (i) the seller, or (ii) a
 - 3 shipping agent.
 - 1 The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
 - 2 configured to:
 - 3 receive, via network communication from at least one of
 - 4 the purchaser, the seller, and a shipping agent, a notice of
 - one of (i) the goods having been received from the seller and
 - being acceptable, or (ii) the services having been acceptably 6
 - 7 performed by the seller; and
 - 8 store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
 - 9 received.
- The system of claim 38, wherein: 1
- 2 the processor is further configured to initiate a credit
- 3 to an account associated with the seller and store
- 4 indication in the memory of the initiation of the credit to the
- 5 seller account; and
- 6 the credit to the seller account is initiated subsequent
- 7 to receiving the notice.
- The system of claim 28, wherein: 1
- 2 the processor is further configured to receive, via
- 3 network communication, a notice of (i) the goods having been

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4 shipped by the seller, or (ii) the services having been

- 5 performed by the seller, initiate a credit to an account
- 6 associated with the seller, store an indication in the memory
- 7 of the initiation of the credit to the seller account;
- 8 the credit to the seller account is initiated after a
- 9 predetermined period, beginning at receipt of the notice; and
- the notice is received from at least one of (i) the
- 11 seller, or (ii) a shipping agent.
 - 1 41. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
 - 2 configured to:
 - 3 receive, via network communication, a notice of one of (i)
 - 4 the goods having been received from the seller and being
 - 5 unacceptable, (ii) the goods having not been received from the
 - 6 seller, (iii) the services having not been acceptably performed
 - 7 by the seller, or (iv) the services having not been performed
 - 8 by the seller; and
- 9 store in the memory an indication that the notice has been
- 10 received.
 - 1 42. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a
 - 2 notice to suspend a pending credit to an account associated
 - 3 with the seller.
- 1 43. The system of claim 41, wherein the notice includes a
- 2 notice to reverse a debit to an account associated with the
- 3 purchaser.
- 1 44. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 receive, via network communication from at least one of
- 4 the purchaser or a shipping agent, a first notice that the
- 5 goods have been returned shipped to the seller;
- store in the memory an indication that the first notice

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7 has been received;

- 8 transmit to the seller, via network communication, a
- 9 second notice that the goods have been returned shipped from
- 10 the purchaser; and
- store in the memory an indication that the second notice
- 12 has been transmitted to the seller.
- 1 45. The system of claim 44, wherein the first notice includes
- 2 a delivery tracking number.
- 1 46. The system of claim 44, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to:
- 3 receive, via network communication from at least one of
- 4 the seller or a shipping agent, a third notice that the goods
- 5 have been received by the seller; and
- store in the memory an indication that the third notice
- 7 has been received.
- 1 47. The system of claim 28, wherein:
- the processor is further configured to initiate a credit
- 3 to an account associated with the purchaser and store in the
- 4 memory an indication of the initiation of the credit to the
- 5 purchaser account; and
- the credit to the purchaser account is initiated after at
- 7 least one of (i) receipt of a notice, via network communication
- 8 from a least one of the seller or a shipping agent, that the
- 9 goods have been returned to the seller by the purchaser and
- 10 accepted by the seller, or (ii) a predetermined period,
- 11 beginning at a notification to the seller that the purchaser
- 12 has shipped the goods to the seller, has elapsed.
 - 1 48. The system of claim 28, wherein the goods or services are
 - 2 goods or services purchased from an internet auction.
 - 1 49. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
 - 2 configured to:

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- initiate a debit from an account associated with the purchaser;
- 5 initiate a credit to an escrow account associated with a
- 6 processing agent;
- 7 initiate a debit to the escrow account associated with the
- 8 processing agent;
- 9 initiate a credit to an account associated with the
- 10 seller;
- store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
- 12 debit to the purchaser account; and
- store an indication in the memory of the initiation of the
- 14 credit to the seller account.
 - 1 50. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the escrow
- 2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the
- 3 purchaser account.
- 1 51. The system of claim 49, wherein the credit to the seller
- 2 account is a corresponding credit to the debit from the escrow
- 3 account.
- 1 52. The system of claim 28, wherein:
- the communications port is further configured to receive
- 3 an instruction, via a web page generated subsequent to the
- 4 purchaser selecting a hyper-link presented to the purchaser by
- 5 an Internet web site selling goods or services, to direct
- 6 execution of an electronic escrow transaction for a sale
- 7 transaction; and
- 8 the web page presented to the purchaser includes details
- 9 of the purchase made from the internet web site.
- 1 53. The system of claim 28, wherein the stored logged
- 2 communications include an indication of the date and time of
- 3 each communication's direction or receipt.

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- 1 54. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to retrieve any of the stored communications from
- 3 the memory.
- 1 55. The system of claim 28, wherein the processor is further
- 2 configured to (i) receive, from a shipping agent, a first
- 3 notice that goods have been delivered to the purchaser, (ii)
- 4 store in the memory an indication that the first notice has
- 5 been received, (iii) receive, from the purchaser, a second
- 6 notice that the delivered goods are acceptable, (iv) store in
- 7 the memory an indication that the second notice has been
- 8 received, and (v) initiate a credit to an account associated
- 9 with the seller.
- 1 56. The system of claim 55, wherein the credit to the seller
- 2 account is initiated after at least one of (i) a predetermined
- 3 period, beginning upon receipt of the first notice, has
- 4 elapsed, or (ii) receipt of the second notice.
- 1 57. An article of manufacture for integrated event tracking of
- 2 an electronic escrow transaction, the article of manufacture
- 3 comprising:
- 4 a computer readable medium; and
- 5 computer programming stored on the medium;
- 6 wherein the stored computer programming is configured to
- 7 be readable from the computer readable medium by a computer to
- 8 thereby cause the computer to operate so as to:
- 9 receive an instruction from a purchaser, via a network, to
- 10 effect an electronic escrow transaction associated with a sale,
- 11 made via the network, of goods or services from a seller;
- 12 direct at least one network communication with each of the
- 13 purchaser, the seller and at least one financial institution in
- 14 effecting the electronic escrow transaction; and
- store a log of each communication associated with the
- 16 electronic escrow transaction in a memory.

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